

Justification for: Closure of Booker T. Washington National Monument to Unmanned Aircraft

Submitted By: Superintendent of Booker T. Washington National Monument

Effective Date: 08-12-14

Launching, landing, or operating an unmanned aircraft from or on lands and waters administered by the National Park Service within the boundaries of Booker T. Washington National Monument is prohibited except as approved in writing by the superintendent. The term “unmanned aircraft” means a device that is used for flight in the air without the possibility of direct human intervention from within the device, and the associated operational elements and components that are required for the pilot or system operator in command to operate or control the device (such as cameras, sensors, communication links). This term includes all types of devices that meet this definition (e.g., model airplanes, quadcopters, drones) that are used for any purpose, including for recreation or commerce.

Booker T. Washington National Monument preserves and protects the birth site and childhood home of Booker T. Washington while interpreting his life experiences and significance in American history as the most powerful African American between 1895 and 1915. The park provides a resource for public education and a focal point for continuing discussions about the legacies of Booker T. Washington and the evolving context of race in American society.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 1.5(c), closure of Booker T. Washington National Monument to unmanned aircraft is necessary to avoid conflict with the purposes for which the park was established, to maintain public health and safety, for protection of the scenic values of the monument, as well as the protection of its natural and cultural resources. Specifically, this action is being taken to ensure that unreasonable noise and unacceptable impacts to the viewshed, facilities contained within, and visitor experience are abated.

This interim measure is being implemented until the National Park service can determine whether specific uses of unmanned aircraft on lands and waters administered by the National Park Service are appropriate and will not cause unacceptable impacts on park resources and values.